

Gonzalez Meza, a beloved mother, grandmother, and friend who changed the face of Texas politics. Choco was a fierce champion for women in public service and a force in the Texas Democratic Party. Her recent passing is a tremendous loss not only for her family, but for so many throughout Texas and the nation whose lives she touched.

Born in Coahuila, Mexico, Choco and her family immigrated to the United States when she was just three years old and settled in Eagle Pass, Texas. She came to San Antonio when she attended St. Mary's University. Choco began effecting meaningful change as a student, when she and my mother, Rosie, helped draft the 10-1 single member district plan adopted in 1977. The skill and initiative she showed led to her being recruited by the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, where she helped disenfranchised minorities exercise their right to vote.

Throughout her career, Choco sought to empower others. As Executive Director of the YWCA, she steered women and girls towards success. She elevated the national conversation around poverty as Executive Director of Partnership for Hope. And she pushed to reform public housing and reduce homelessness when she joined her friend Henry G. Cisneros at the Department of Housing and Urban Development as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Relations and the Liaison to the White House in the Clinton Administration. She continued that work when she returned to San Antonio and became Senior Vice President at the San Antonio Housing Authority. Later, Choco served as President of American Sunrise, a nonprofit that provides educational and economic opportunities for children and families. She founded her own consulting firm, and in 2011, President Barack Obama appointed her to serve as a Commissioner to The Commission on Presidential Scholars.

Choco's unparalleled passion for organizing made her an invaluable asset to the Democratic Party. She served on the Democratic National Committee, was chief of staff for District 5 Councilwoman Shirley Gonzalez, and was elected Bexar County Democratic Chair. Most recently, Choco led Hillary Clinton's campaign operations in San Antonio. In all her political work, Choco tirelessly fought for social justice and strove to create opportunity for marginalized groups.

Choco's spirit lives on through her family—her beloved husband Daniel, daughter Ivalis, granddaughter Emma, and son Danny, who is a trusted member of my staff. Choco was truly a historic figure in Texas politics and a compassionate, selfless soul. We mourn her passing and are grateful for all she gave to our community in San Antonio and to our nation's democracy.

#### HONORING MRS. HILDA GIRTMAN PITTS

#### HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Hilda Girtman Pitts, a lifelong resident of Boynton Beach, Florida, who passed at the age of 102 on August 20, 2016. Born in 1913, Mrs. Pitts spent her childhood on 2.5

acres of farmland off the Federal Highway near Boynton Beach.

At the age of 21, she married Solomon Pitts at the St. Paul A.M.E. Church in the city of Boynton Beach, and built their first home on 12th Avenue in-town. After many years of marriage, Mrs. Pitts had eight children, nine grandchildren, as well as many great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren. Mrs. Pitts became a "Gold Star Mother" when her son, Cleveland Pitts, made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War.

Mrs. Pitts was also an entrepreneur. She opened an antique store, known as "Mrs. Hilda's," which sold American-made, handcrafted furniture and home goods. The antique store stands to this day on East Ocean Avenue in Boynton Beach as a memorial to Mrs. Pitts' legacy.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Pitts has been a very religious woman and was heavily involved in the church community in Boynton Beach. She attended the African Methodist Episcopal Church from an early age. She followed her children to the New Christian Life Church in 1984, where she became a dynamic and regular churchgoer.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Hilda Girtman Pitts will be remembered through her family, her friends, and all the many people she touched in her 102 years of life. She was truly a shining star of the Boynton Beach community. I am so pleased to honor her life and legacy. She will be dearly missed.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF MRS. BRENDA VAUGHN

#### HON. MARK MEADOWS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Brenda Vaughn of McDowell County, North Carolina. On behalf of the people of Western North Carolina, I would like to thank Mrs. Vaughn for over 35 years of service to our communities and congratulate her on her retirement this year.

Brenda Vaughn began her service with the McDowell County Sheriff's Department in 1980 as a dispatcher. She then served as cook at the Sheriff Jail Kitchen until she became a Jailer in October of 1998. After two years in that role, she became an Administrative Assistant then moved up within the Department to Shift Sergeant and later Assistant Jail Administrator. In 2013, Mrs. Vaughn was promoted to Jail Administrator. Mrs. Vaughn has dutifully served the community in this capacity for the last three years.

Outside of work, Mrs. Vaughn continues to be an active member of many community organizations. She is a member of Nealsville Church of God in Glenwood, where she is part of the Ladies Auxiliary. She is also a leader outside of her church, serving as treasurer for the Charles W. Queen Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 84 in McDowell County; as President of the McDowell County Republican Women's Club; and as the Secretary of the McDowell County Republican Party. She and her husband Bobby have two sons and three grandchildren.

Mrs. Vaughn has earned the respect and friendship of the people of McDowell County

through her hard work and wide-ranging involvement in her community. For her service to Western North Carolina, I am honored to express to Mrs. Vaughn the gratitude and best wishes of the people of North Carolina on her retirement.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF POST 8358 ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

#### HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Chung Mei Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8358 as it celebrates its 70th anniversary. As the members of Post 8358 mark this momentous occasion, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring them for their long history of service to veterans and the community in Sacramento.

Chung Mei Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8358 was formed on October 19, 1946 by returning Chinese-American veterans from Sacramento. Due to the prevailing prejudiced attitudes of the time, the Chung Mei veterans had no choice but to form their own exclusive VFW Post. Post 8358 is an active and valued member of the Sacramento community, which I represent. For instance, the Chung Mei Post 8358 proudly sponsors the Sacramento Lion Dance Youth Troupe, which helps foster civic responsibility and keeps the traditions of Asian cultures alive for current and future generations. Post 8358 contributes greatly to the diversity and multiplicity of cultures in the Sacramento region, which is one of the most diverse in the entire country.

Post 8358 members are decorated veterans who participate in local parades, staff community events, and host several fundraising drives that provide funds for programs that benefit veterans and their families. Several of the founding members of Post 8358 are amongst the many who are celebrating today. Post 8358 continues to promote services for veterans, cultural acceptance, and civic participation in Sacramento.

Mr. Speaker, as the members of Post 8358 celebrate its 70th anniversary, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring them for their service to our country and to the Sacramento area.

#### HONORING GEORGE POUMAKIS

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor George Poumakis, a highly-successful entrepreneur and distinguished member of the Greek community in my district.

Mr. Poumakis was recently recognized by the Federation of Hellenic American Educators and the Greek Teacher Association of Florida for the being the pioneer and founder of the first Greek immersion charter school in the United States—the Athenian Academy. Today, the Athenian Academy is recognized by the Florida Department of Education as a High Performing School—receiving an "A" grade—

and is the only school in Pinellas County that teaches two foreign languages (Greek and Spanish) daily to all K–8 students.

As a father of four boys, all of whom attended public schools, I am very familiar with the link between a robust public education system and our nation's vitality. Benjamin Franklin once said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." Mr. Poumakis is a valuable community partner and stands as an example of main street solutions to main street challenges. Through the entrepreneurial approach which brought him personal success in the past, Mr. Poumakis managed to build an academy which will contribute to the success of countless lives in Florida's Twelfth Congressional District for years to come.

I commend the Federation of Hellenic American Educators and the Greek Teacher Association of Florida for recognizing the contributions of Mr. Poumakis, and I hope every American can learn from and emulate the commitment of this Greek entrepreneur to education.

#### KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

#### HON. CHARLES W. DENT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kutztown University on the occasion of its 150th Anniversary. Throughout the past year, Kutztown has celebrated its sesquicentennial, culminating with Founders' Day on 15 September 2016.

In 1866, the residents of Berks County found a need for school teachers while the nation as a whole recovered from the Civil War and sought to prepare itself for a new era. Residents solved their shortage by establishing the Keystone State Normal School.

Over time, advancing industries and professions required students to be trained more broadly, with education covering a diverse range of studies. In order to rise to the occasion, the school grew in size and sophistication, eventually changing its name to Kutztown State Teacher's College in 1928, and later becoming Kutztown State College in 1960.

Today, Kutztown, which achieved university status in 1983, is comprised of four colleges, including Business, Education, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Performing Arts. The university enrolls approximately 9,000 students from forty states and nations. In addition to providing an outstanding education, Kutztown also offers students the opportunity to participate in vibrant cultural and social events and to compete in athletics at the varsity, club, and intramural levels.

It is my honor to congratulate the students, staff, faculty, and over 72,500 Kutztown Alumni as they celebrate their 150th Anniversary. May they enjoy continued success in educating the minds of our future leaders and integral members of society.

#### HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF WINE SPECTATOR

#### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Wine Spectator, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary and marks four decades of success and dedication to excellence.

Wine Spectator was first published by Bob Morrissey in 1976 as a tabloid newspaper to educate and entertain wine consumers. Marvin R. Shanken, a publisher and wine aficionado, saw great potential in the publication and, at Morrissey's request, acquired it in 1979. Mr. Shanken and Executive Editor Thomas Matthews have since transformed Wine Spectator into an institution that informs and connects our international wine community.

Wine Spectator editors provide authoritative buying advice, reviewing nearly 20,000 wines each year in independent blind tastings. The magazine puts wine in context, profiling vintners and regions, analyzing vintages and market trends as well as offering travel and dining guides. Wine Spectator has received critical acclaim for its excellent work informing wine consumers. It has been named a finalist in the National Magazine Awards Special Interest category and a top 5 best consumer magazines. Today, Wine Spectator is the most widely read wine publication in the world with a circulation of 400,000 and a global readership of 3.5 million people.

Since 1981, Wine Spectator has also hosted the Wine Experience, a weekend of tastings and seminars which concludes with a Grand Award Banquet honoring top restaurants in 50 states and 70 countries on their excellent wine lists. The event funds the Wine Spectator Scholarship Foundation, which has raised more than \$20 million to support organizations that invest in the future of our wine community including the University of California at Davis, Sonoma State University, the Culinary Institute of America, and the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Florida International University. Since 1982, Wine Spectator has also honored 34 individuals with its Distinguished Service Award for their contributions to our wine community.

Mr. Speaker, this American institution has been a trusted source for wine consumers for 40 years by maintaining its commitment to integrity and expertise. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor Wine Spectator and its visionary leader, Marvin R. Shanken, here today.

#### RECOGNIZING BRIE OAKLEY

#### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brie Oakley for her first place finish in the Colorado 5A Girls' State Championship Cross Country Meet on October 29th, 2016. She has shown dedication and excellence throughout her cross country career, which has brought her to the pinnacle of high school athletics, a state champion.

A Grandview High School Huskies senior, Oakley finished with a time of 17 minutes and 7.83 seconds, smashing the course record at the Norris Penrose Equestrian Center in Colorado Springs by over a minute. I am proud to report that Oakley has become the first girls cross country state champion from Grandview High School.

I would also like to congratulate Grandview coach Allyson Robbins and the teachers and staff of Grandview High School, whom have made Oakley's success possible. Their mentorship and guidance played an important role in her ability to succeed at the highest level of high school athletics.

I am proud to congratulate Brie Oakley on her hard earned state championship and for being a positive role model for other students in Colorado's 6th congressional district.

#### HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BRYAN

#### HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2016*

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of the First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas.

Since its founding on November 18, 1866, thousands of families have called First Baptist Bryan home.

During the early years of the church, services were held in an abandoned saloon under the leadership of Rev. William Bartlett Eaves. The church would begin to grow larger and in 1883 a frame building was erected as a permanent place of worship. As the congregation continued to grow, bigger facilities were built to meet the needs of the church family for the next century. The church would also begin to expand its mission and focus on preaching the Gospel to the students of Texas A&M University. A strong bond was created between the church and the student community that still stands today.

As more families and students joined the church, the importance of Sunday School began to emerge. Pastor John Held began to spread the teaching ministry beyond the church walls by organizing a successful Christ-focused men's Bible Study.

Throughout the years, the church family has never lost sight of its commitment to fellowship, discipleship, worship, ministry, and evangelism. Since its beginning, the church has been involved in numerous mission activities with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Creath Brazos Baptist Association. They have sent missions all across the world including Estonia, Australia, Germany, Zambia, Kenya, and Ghana. First Baptist Bryan has played an important role in planting numerous other churches throughout the area. They have also helped plant the Yurigaoka Baptist Church in Tokyo, Japan.

The success of First Baptist Bryan can be attributed to the outstanding leadership from its Pastors. Since its establishment, 24 Pastors have led the church in worship and growth, each bringing different gifts and abilities to the church family. All of them brought a strong commitment to stewardship, mission,